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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: DECEMBER 02, 2008

Summary: Most Pakistani newspapers highlighted prominently on Tuesday White House spokeswoman Perino's remarks that the "U.S. has no reason to believe that Pakistan's government was involved in last week's terrorist attacks in Mumbai." All newspapers also reported that "Mumbai mounted pressure on Pakistan to act against specific suspects New Delhi wants to be extradited." President Zardai's comments offering "unconditional support to India to investigate Mumbai carnage" also received front-page coverage. Newspapers also front-paged reports that "militants hit NATO supplies and torched 22 trucks in Peshawar." Also highlighted were reports that "ten people were killed when a suicide bomber blew up an explosive-laden truck near a security post in Mingora (NWFP)." The statement by NATO spokesman that "Pakistan must continue action in tribal areas" also received wide coverage.

Most newspapers continued to run editorials on the terrorism incidents in Mumbai and also on the All Parties Security Conference convened by Prime Minister Gilani. The English daily, "Dawn," advised that "India and Pakistan face a common threat and unless the two countries adopt all means to cooperate with one another, the costs for the billion-plus people of South Asia will be high in these times of terror." The second largest Urdu daily, "Nawa-i-Waqt," observed that "convening of national security conference is a welcome step taken by Prime Minister Gilani. A strategy should be adopted to utilize this gifted opportunity for ridding ourselves of the American war on terror." End Summary.

News Stories

"U.S. Trusts Pakistan, Says White House" "Dawn" (12/02)

"The United States has no reason to believe that Pakistan's government was involved in last week's terrorist attacks in Mumbai, and the Bush administration trusts Pakistan to investigate the issue, the White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said on Monday."

"India Toughens Stand, Calls For Strong Action; Demand To Extradite Dawood Ibrahim, Masood Azhar" "Dawn" (12/02)

"Sleuths from Israel, the United States and Britain were studying clues from the battle zone of last week's terror attacks in Mumbai as India mounted pressure on Pakistan on Monday to act against specific suspects New Delhi wants to be extradited. Pakistan's High Commissioner Shahid Malik was called to the Foreign Ministry where he was 'informed that the recent terrorist attack on Mumbai was carried out by elements from Pakistan,' an Indian statement said."

"All Attackers Were Pakistanis: India" "The News" (12/02)

"India on Monday formally accused 'elements' in Pakistan of being behind the devastating Islamic militant attacks in Mumbai and

demanded that Islamabad take 'strong action.' In New Delhi's first formal complaint to Islamabad, India said it 'expects that strong action would be taken against those elements, whosoever they may be, responsible for this outrage,' a statement said."

"India Hands Over 20 Suspects' List" "The Nation" (12/02)

" An Indian television channel reported that New Delhi also presented a list of 20 suspected persons, including Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, Dawood Ibrahim and Masood Azhar."

"Attacker Trained In Pakistan, alleges India" "Dawn" (12/02)

"Indian investigators claimed on Monday the militants who attacked Mumbai had months of commando training in Pakistan.... The training was organized by the Lashkar-i-Tayyaba group and conducted by a former member of the Pakistani army, an officer close to the probe alleged."

"Zardari Offers India Unconditional Help" "Dawn" (12/02)

"President Asif Ali Zardari again offered on Monday unconditional cooperation to New Delhi to investigate the Mumbai carnage after the Indian government formally accused elements in Pakistan of being involved in the incident."

"Militants Hit NATO supplies; 22 Trucks Torched" "Dawn" (12/02)

"Militants torched 22 vehicles, including two Humvee armored personnel carriers, and killed two drivers after they stormed early on Monday morning a terminal on the Ring Road, Peshawar, where trucks taking NATO supplies to Afghanistan were parked."

"Pakistan Must Continue Action In Tribal Areas, Says NATO" "Dawn" (12/02)

"Pakistan must continue military operations against militants in its tribal regions despite rising tensions with India following the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, NATO officials said on Monday. 'We hope Pakistan's efforts (against the insurgents) are not diminished as a result of what happened' in Mumbai, NATO spokesman James Appathurai told reporters."

"NATO Not To Conduct Operation In Pakistan" "The Nation" (12/02)

"NATO shrugged off on Monday an attack on a convoy transporting supplies for its troops in Afghanistan, saying that the strike on a terminal in Pakistan had not hurt the alliance's operation there. Neither the Alliance takes part in operations inside Pakistan nor it will conduct any operation in the Federally-Administered tribal Areas, its spokesman James Appathurai said."

"10 Killed In Mingora Suicide Attack" "Dawn" (12/02)

"Ten people were killed and 49 others injured when a suicide bomber blew up an explosive-laden truck near the Sangota security post, some seven kilometers north-east of Mingora, on Monday."

"15 More Militants Die In Bajaur Attack" "The Nation" (12/02)

"Jets and artillery killed 15 militants linked to the Taliban and Al Qaeda in a tribal area near the Afghan border, an official said on Monday."

"Obama Expects Zardari To Fulfill Pledge On Probe" "Dawn" (12/02)

"U.S. President-elect Barack Obama said on Monday that India would be within its rights if it took retaliatory actions against militants hiding inside Pakistan. Mr. Obama made these comments at a news conference in Chicago.... He said it was important to let the investigators do their jobs and determine who was responsible for carrying out 'these heinous acts' in Mumbai."

"Pakistan Must Cooperate In Terror Investigation, Says Rice" "Daily Times" (12/02)

"United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has told Pakistan the U.S. expects complete cooperation in investigations into the

terrorist rampage in India. Pakistan's response will be a test of the will of the new civilian government, she said on Monday."

"Rice Likely To Arrive On Thursday" "The Nation" (12/02)

"U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is visiting the region and might arrive in India on Wednesday to talk to the Indian leadership. She is also expected to visit Pakistan on Thursday, according to official sources."

"Al Qaeda Behind Mumbai Carnage" "The Nation" (12/02)

"Pakistani officials, who have been on the trail of Al Qaeda for years, believe that the Mumbai attacks were the handiwork of this global terrorist network headed by Usama bin Laden that targeted India for the first time because of its pro-Israel policy."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Times Of Terror," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (12/02)

"What cannot be condoned is the behavior of the Indian media. Not only does this put pressure on the Indian government to keep up its accusations and resist moves for a cooperative stance, it also damages people-to-people ties.... India and Pakistan face a common threat - Pakistan more so than India - and unless the two countries

adopt all means to cooperate with one another, the costs for the billion-plus people of South Asia will be high in these times of terror."

"National Security Conference: Don't Waste Gifted Opportunity," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (12/02)

"Convening of national security conference is a welcome step taken by Prime Minister Gilani.... America and Europe have been told that Pakistan army deployed at western border could be withdrawn, whereas there is a willing for a dialogue with Baitullah Mehsud and Maulana Fazal Ullah.... A strategy should be adopted to utilize gifted opportunity for ridding ourselves of the American war [on terror]."

"A Joint Policy On National Security," an editorial in the leading mass circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (12/02)

"Merely convening a National Security Conference is not enough, but an all-inclusive policy should be devised that upholds Pakistan's national interests, and sends a unanimous message to all that we as a nation are one to confront any internal or external threat against Pakistan."

"Putting Heads Together," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/02)

"Amidst signs that India is ready to maximize the pressure on Pakistan following the Mumbai terrorist drama.... But we must also keep in mind more such problems will arise until we persuade the world that we are determined to drive terrorists out and will do all we can to ensure there is no ambiguity in this."

"After Mumbai, Karachi," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (12/02)

"Those who are encouraging a 'united stand against India' campaign in the media should look carefully into the nature of trouble inside Pakistan. It is not wise to trust a statement - concocted or real - from Waziristan that the loyal tribesmen will stand side by side with the Pakistan army if India brings its troops to the border as it did in 2001.... One should remind the war enthusiasts that every time the tribesmen have been used in war against India it hasn't really redounded to Pakistan's advantage."

"Correct Your Tone, Or We Will Set You Right," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (12/02)

"The civil war in Pakistani tribal areas is painful for all Pakistanis. However, powers nurturing aggression against Pakistan should know that this infighting erupted on difference of opinion on a foreign policy issue. As far as love and loyalty to Pakistan is concerned no one is inferior to other. If war is imposed on then the entire nation including tribals will fight the enemy."

"FATA, Mumbai And Karachi: Where Are Circumstance Leading To?," an editorial note in the Karachi-based, pro Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (12/02)

"This is high time for the government of Pakistan to end hostilities with all militants in tribal areas, and renounce the U.S.-led war on terror. This act will not only quench flames in Pakistan's tribal and border areas, but this move will also dissuade India from any military venture."

"Taliban's Offer For National Defense," an editorial note in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (12/02)

"The Taliban's assurance to lend a hand to the government of Pakistan to deal with any possible Indian aggression must be welcomed. It demonstrates that Taliban aren't behind the ongoing turmoil in FATA but in fact those elements who crave to strike at the foundations of our homeland are creating problems for the government. Apart from the present showdown with India, now question is that if Taliban are so patriotic and loyal, why they don't settle their differences with the government in a more civilized way of dialogue. Moreover, the GoP should also not push these compatriot Taliban to the wall, as any settlement between the two will leave no scope for aliens to hang about in the tribal areas to any further extent."

"High Time To Bring Peace With Militants," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (12/02)

"The militants are proved beyond any doubt that they have strong attachment with Pakistan despite bombing and strikes by our own forces.... Tribals are known for their fearless fighting spirit and their offer at this critical juncture means much for the country. We would, therefore, urge the leadership of the country not to waste more time and ... to concentrate on the eastern border."

"Stoking The Fires," an op-ed by Rasul Bakhsh Rais in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (12/02)

"Unfortunately, Indian leaders followed the tone set by the media without giving much thought to the implications of their statements.... The war on terror requires international cooperation, more meaningful and institutionalized than has been forthcoming. An even bigger challenge is for India and Pakistan to cooperate with each other in fighting terrorism. It is not going to be easy given the present climate of distrust."

"New Terrorists In An Old Context," an op-ed by Mosharraf Zaidi in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/02)

"Forget the accusations of Pakistani involvement. First, they are about as unique and unexpected as the presence of water during rain. Second, despite the potential plausibility of the accusations, there is an increasing stack of evidence that from New Delhi to Assam to Calcutta, India does have a domestic terrorism problem. Third, there is little argument against the fact that whatever involvement there might be, it is a product of non-state actors, not the Pakistani state."

"A Few Days In Mumbai," an op-ed by Kamila Hyat in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/02)

"New Delhi's pointless finger-pointing towards Pakistan, in the absence of solid evidence, seems only to be a continuation of its ostrich-like refusal to face up to immense problems in its own midst. The panic-stricken allegations, including the quite ludicrous charge that the militants may have arrived at Mumbai's shores aboard a boat from Karachi, expose, most of all, major security lapses.

The resignation of India's interior minister underscores this point.

The issues of flawed security and intelligence failures will remain a key issue in India."

"Carnage In Mumbai: Huge Trust Deficit," an op-ed by Zaheer Bhatti in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (12/02)

"Worst still, the smugness of the Indians could easily sabotage and badly hurt American interests, as Pakistan which had so far been a frontline 'ally' against its sinister war thrust upon it much against the wishes of its people, could per force withdraw its troops from its Western borders to face up to the new threat.... There was a hidden hand, which had schematically invented and exported terrorism in the shape of its self-created monster of Al Qaeda, and labeled it as Muslim insurgency."

"Far Away From Peace," an op-ed by Dr. Tariq Rahman in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (12/02)

"The knee-jerk reaction to blame Pakistan - the state of Pakistan - must stop. It is counterproductive since it prevents the Pakistani government from trying to help India.... The blunder of Pakistan in joining America's proxy war in Afghanistan in the 1980s is the fault of Pakistani decision-makers of that period as it is of American decision-makers. Now both have the albatross of Al Qaeda and the Taliban around their necks. Pakistan should never have used these religious fighters in Kashmir as it is alleged. That too is a whirlwind we are reaping."

"Dealing With The Militants," an op-ed by Mahmood Shah in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (12/02)

"Pakistan is caught in the eye of the storm in the so-called war on terror between the U.S. and its allies on one side and Al Qaeda and the Taliban on the other.... Many think tanks even in the U.S. feel that this so-called war on terror is more of a ploy and the real intentions lie somewhere else.... The operations by the local Taliban in Pakistan need finances and meticulous planning. Ignorance can be a blessing but not always. The U.S. drone attacks in Pakistan are tantamount to weakening the state in the face of the open onslaught by Al Qaeda and its surrogates.... This is the time for a major rethink regarding our threat hypothesisation and strategic orientation to deal with the complex situation on our western borders."

"Targeting The ISI," an op-ed by Anjum Niaz in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/02)

"With the Americans, Indians, Israelis and God knows who else wanting to down the ISI, Zardari's last resort and ours too, is the army and its intelligence agency. The impolitic Zardari-Gilani leadership should stop showing off to the world that they and not the establishment control Pakistan. Their false bravura and reckless statements can spell disaster."

Patterson